

“The cooperation between the Baltic states in the security area”

Jūlija Imaka



Master's Degree Thesis /Department of Political Science/

Faculty of Social Science

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

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Abbreviations used in the thesis

BALTBAT - Baltic battalion

BALTCCIS - BALTCCIS

BALTDEFCOL - Baltic Defence College

BALTMED - Baltic Medical System project

BALTNET - Baltic Air Surveillance Network

BALTRON- Baltic Naval Squadron

BMC – Baltic Minister’s Committee

CBSS - Council of Baltic Sea States

CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy

EU – European Union

IFOR – Implementation Force

MAP – Membership Action Plan

MC - Ministers’ Committee

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OSCE – Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe

PfP – Partnership for Peace

SFOR – Stabilisation Force

UN – United Nations

US – The United States of America

USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WEU – Western European Union

INTRODUCTION

Looking back at the history of the Baltic states, we see that the last ten years of the past century with the overall support of new international security let the three Baltic states get free from totalitarianism and gradually liquidated the consequences of the Soviet occupation. The Baltic states which have had sorrowful historical experience and restored their independence in the beginning of 1990's had plenty of reasons to look for additional security guarantees in Euroatlantic security structures in addition to their own capabilities. The Baltic states perceived European and transatlantic security, political and economic structures as a background to their development as modern, democratic, secure and economically strong states.

Since the beginning of 1990's the cooperation and solidarity of the three Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is a well known process in European and world politics. Joint movement towards the independence facilitated this cooperation. The "singing revolution", common interests in defence and foreign policy area, as well as the integration into the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) process laid the basis for solidarity of the Baltic states.

The theme of my research is "The cooperation of the Baltic states in the security area". Within this framework the role of cooperation between the Baltic states in security area on their way to the EU and NATO will be evaluated. It should be stressed that the most successful cooperation among the three Baltic states was in the defence area. In the above framework I discussed the opportunities and problems of the cooperation of the Baltic states on their way to the EU and NATO.

In today's world the cooperation is seen as an undeniable driving force of development and integration. The cooperation of the Baltic states was an opportunity to get visible in international processes, thus increasing resources and ability to be influential. In addition, mutual cooperation is viewed as an opportunity to expand and multiply security realization tools with the help or support of other members as well

as to build an effective defence structure. Joint defence capabilities have increased as a result of the Baltic cooperation, thus also strengthening regional security.

Cooperation between the Baltic states and even broadly – within the Baltic Sea region, was not seen as a replacement of broader integration processes (integration in the EU and NATO), but as a means of the successful movement towards this direction. The factor, thanks to which, regional projects the Baltic states received intellectual and financial assistance from the Western countries played an important role.

In this thesis only integration into the EU and NATO as an option of the security policy solution of the Baltic states will be observed and examined.

Problem definition: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania during the examined period were new, small and weak states with limited resources. That is why their freedom of action in international politics was strongly limited, but dependence from other actors in political arena was increased. The Baltic states due to their limited resources were much more weaker and strongly experienced different kinds of threats and influence of the international environment.

In order to prove that cooperation of the Baltic states in the security area was of considerable importance, I proceed from the following hypothesis: *Cooperation between the Baltic states in the security area facilitated their admission to the EU and NATO.*

In order to examine the theme, problem and to prove the hypothesis the following ***objectives*** are put forward:

- to examine whether cooperation between the Baltic states in security area was a reality;
- to clarify whether mutual cooperation was the factor, which increased their chances to integrate into the EU and NATO more rapidly.

Tasks:

- To find out what factors determined the cooperation between the Baltic states?
- To clarify which factors could be considered as facilitating Baltic cooperation?
- To examine the chronology of attempts to establish regional cooperation between the Baltic states and problems which hindered the cooperation in the 20th century;
- To examine what Baltic cooperation institutions were founded after the restoration of independence and whether they were dealing with consideration of security issues and coordination of cooperation;
- To examine mutual cooperation in the area of military projects - the Baltic battalion (BALTBAT), the Baltic Naval Squadron (BALTRON), the Baltic Air Surveillance Network (BALTNET), Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL).

The research of the chosen theme begins with the exploring of the distinctive features of the small states. The main theoretical basis of the thesis aims to examine whether Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are small states with limited resources and ability to influence international politics which recognize that are unable to maintain security with their own forces only. This will let to find the explanation of the necessity of the Baltic cooperation because regional cooperation for the small states is mainly explained with the ability to strengthen security and increase influence on the global processes.

The central place is dedicated to the definition of security concept because securing the existence, sovereignty, national identity and territorial integrity of state as well as the avoidance of military conflicts, is considered to be the main foreign policy objectives not only for small, but also for bigger states and powers. As small states are especially vulnerable to the threats posed by the changes in in the international environment. Security ensuring becomes a prior issue thus forcing small states to appraise different strategies, including regional cooperation, taking into account limited resources.

The second and the third part of the thesis is dedicated to the examination of external international environment which influenced the opportunities of the Baltic states to cooperate, as well as the opportunity to search for security policy solutions not only individually or within Northern Europe, but broader – to associate the growth of economic stability, welfare and security with the EU and NATO. The influence of the states within the Baltic Sea region, Russia, the EU and NATO on security of the Baltic states will be examined.

In the fourth part the history of the Baltic cooperation in 20's and 30's and after the restoration of the independence will be examined as well as the factors which promoted and hindered the cooperation. Also practical cooperation between the Baltic states within the common institutional framework and the joint cooperation projects in the defence area will be examined in this part of the master's thesis.

Prior to the beginning of working out the thesis, existent researches, periodical publications, conference materials, scientific literature, documents, as well as the Internet resources concerning the examined theme were acquainted and studied.

In order to be better oriented in multishaped and broad literature exposure, sources and literature used in the master's thesis were divided into three groups – basic literature, periodical publications and other sources. As important sources of the first group literature the following should be mentioned: *Small States and the Security Challenge in the New Europe* (Knudsen 1996), *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Buzan et al 2003), *Livet i Hegemonens Skygge - En småstats sikkerhetslogikk* (Kjølberg), *Foreign policy and security interests of small states: theoretical aspects* (Jundzis 1997), *Regional aspects of Latvia's security policy* (Ozoliņa 2000), *Security Communities* (Adler et al 1998) which were used mainly in theoretical part of the thesis.

Different ideas and confirmations to the ideas for the thesis were gained by the author examining materials of the conferences which were jointly arranged by Conrad

Adenauer foundation and Latvian Institute for Foreign Policy and dedicated to the problems and opportunities of the Baltic states.

The parts on practical cooperation between the Baltic states in the area of joint institutions and military projects are mainly based on the published cooperation agreements which were signed between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as on the periodical publications and the Internet resources.

1. Small states in the international system.

1.1. Distinctive features of small states.

Three Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are small states (Jundzis, 1996a). There is no universal definition of „smallness” of a state. States could be defined as small, middle or big compared to other states. Another issue is that other variables can be used to define whether a state is small or big. The division of states into small, middle and big depends on the problem area and is based on many criterias (Kjølberg:10). Quantitative parameters such as size, population, military power, and sometimes even gross domestic product often is used to distinguish in which from abovementioned categories a state could be included. It is mentioning that division based on the quantitative parameters is subjective and is often based on the personal conception and perception. Another question is whether being small means also being weak? According to empirical evidence many states that are small by size (e.g. Austria, Israel, Denmark and the like) are by no means weak, but rather strong if looking to well-functioning political institutions.

The division of states based on qualitative methods raises another problem. The particularity of each makes it problematic to make a complete notion based on the specific criterias. According to Knudsen (Knudsen et al. 1996:5) in order to identify to which category a state belongs to it is necessary to compare it with its neighbours. Thus, each state which is smaller than its neighbour, could be classified as a small one. According to Krause and Singer as ”minor” (small) could be defined the states „whose diplomatic and material resources are so limited that their leaders focus mostly on the protection of their territorial integrity rather than on the pursuit of more far – reaching global objectives” (Krause et al 2001:16). According to this definition which stresses the protection of the territorial integrity as a priority for small states, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia could be assigned to this category.

The definition of smallness is not an easy task because of its tendency to be all-encompassing. In this thesis the term ”small state” will be used as a term which

incorporates two sets of parameters: the first, qualitative ones – territory, population and economy, and the second – weak statehood which was a distinctive feature of all the three Baltic states during the observed period, that is poorly – functioning political institutions due to recently gained independence, lack of experience and limited resources.

1.2. The place of small states in the international system.

Small states, especially the new ones, are more vulnerable to the influences of different external and internal factors. For the most part they are not able to obtain stability with their own resources. If a state that lacks resources and experience wants to participate in the international arena to the same extent as a big one does, it will not be able to prevent danger to the same extent as a big one will. That is why it would be logically to conclude that small states are more easily influenced and threatsubjugated than the big ones because their means to prevent a threat are more limited.

Despite the differences, small states have many common features both on the domestic and external level. Knudsen (Knudsen et al. 1996) brought forward six basic variables concerning security policy of the small states which have direct influence on their foreign policy;

- 1) strategic significance of geographical location of a small state;
- 2) the degree of tension between the dominating great powers;
- 3) domestic political situation of the nearest leading great power;
- 4) historical experience of relations between the small state and the neighbouring great power;
- 5) the policy towards a small state of other, rivaling great power;
- 6) existence of multilateral cooperation framework.

After the end of the Cold War transformation process took place in the international system. A number of new small states occurred and their role in the international

decision – making process have increased thanks to the membership in international organizations. Nevertheless, the existence of a small state is often threatened.

Unequal position of new small states, comparing to the other states in the international system, as well as relative weakness, lack of experience and insecurity, make small states feel threatened. Danger that a small state feels may lead to instability and even conflict. That is why a small state is often being considered as a potential source of risk. The war in former Yugoslavia which threatened the stability in the whole Europe, could be mentioned as an example.

Strict hierarchy and conformity are distinctive features of international order and each state, depending on power rate/volume/size, has its own place. Potential of political power plays an important role in the ability of a state to implement its national interests in the international decision-making process. The potential of big states is more eminent - they are able to defend their interests and rights with their own recourses. States with small power potential are often not able to secure the realisation of their own interests; they are more vulnerable to internal and external crises.

The lack of resources and influence is often the main reason why small states prefer to search for allies among the equal ones. A possibility that states which have similar interests or are in a similar position will be interested in cooperation increases. The following groups of states could have similar interests:

- 1) those, that also are small/weak;
- 2) those, located in one geographic area and subjugated to similar conditions.

The feeling of insecurity small states feel often emerges both from international instability and from the geographical and geopolitical reality. A small state being located next to a great power may experience great security challenges, especially if the big neighbour is interested in incorporation of a small state in its sphere of influence. Knudsen stresses that: "insecurity is the essence of a small state's existence, and never more acutely than when it is located next to a great power"

(Bleiere 1997: 4). On the other hand, small states may secure their stability and get help if a conflict situation occurs by building bilateral relations with a potential defender, thus, establishing asymmetric patron – client relationship where a small state is a client and big power – patron. However, in such asymmetric relationship both a patron and a client have different interests. Abovementioned relationship is based on the assumption that a client supports its patron in the areas in which a patron is interested in, thus proving its loyalty and getting in return the defence of patron if a conflict situation takes place (Kjølberg: 14). Thus being allies with great states have obvious good effects on a small state because a great power – patron could defend its client against potential enemies.

Every state is unique and what strategy it will choose to implement national interests will depend on domestic factors and external environment. However, a number of common features will increase if we analyze foreign policy of small states, dividing them into groups based on different criterias: new and old small states, developed and underdeveloped, those, which feel threatened and those, which feel relatively safe. East have summarized the basic features that are typical to the behaviour of small states. They are the following:

- low participation level in addressing the world problems. It stems from the low capacity and lack of resources a small state has comparing to other actors in the international arena;
- high level of support to intergovernmental organizations;
- high participation level in intergovernmental organizations;
- avoiding the use of military force as a tool to implement state interests;
- avoiding the policy which may lead to alienation of the strong powers;
- functional and geographically narrow range of concernment of foreign policy activities;
- often appeal to moral and rights in the international arena (East 1973: 557).

The abovementioned features are mostly oriented to activities on intergovernmental level, international organizations, as well as to "equalization" policy, which is based on finding the equal ones and avoiding the use of force individually.

Limited resources determine necessity of small states to use them prudently both domestically and on the international level. The lack of power anticipates low risk policy and search for opportunities to increase influence in the international system as well as an opportunity to realize national interests. In order to secure the existence and enforce realization of national interests interstate cooperation seems to be the most appropriate tool for a small state.

As interstate cooperation is the central term in this thesis, it is necessary to make a notion of what cooperation is. Cooperation between states is limited and often has temporary nature because states do not trust each other. Realists believe that there is a little possibility to establish community beyond state borders; territorial states therefore are the only units of community. Since states often do not trust to each other and have different interests, it is not easy to achieve cooperation in the world politics. Cooperation exists depending on issues. It should be stressed that cooperation does not mean the absence of the conflict. It takes place in a situation that contains a mixture of conflicting and complementary interests (Kapustans 1998:1). This means that cooperation does not necessarily exist in all joint arrangements. Cooperation requires that "the actions of separate individuals or organizations – which are not in pre-existent harmony – be brought into conformity with one another through a process of negotiation which is often referred to as "policy coordination" (Kapustans 1998:2). In other words cooperation occurs when actors recognize the existence of common interests and tailor their behaviour to preferences of other actors through a process of coordination in order to achieve common goals. It means that cooperation does not presuppose full amalgamation of interests and harmony in all areas and may include elements of disagreement over issues.

1.3. Possibilities and limitations of the foreign policy of small states.

Special attention in security policy of small states is vested to availability of resources - military, economic or diplomatic. Limited resources hinder small states to compete with middle- and large powers when it comes to decision - taking on the international level. A small state has relatively small possibility to engage in a decision-making that concern for example redistribution of spheres of influence. Often new and underdeveloped states are balancing on the line which determines the likelihood of survival in the international system. In a case if a problem occurs, a small state has low ability to mobilize resources (just because often it does not have enough resources necessary to prevent a conflict) and will search for help among the "friendly" states. However, search for help in a problem developing stage could be too late and damage could be greater than if forces had been joined prior to a conflict situation. It means that joining resources with the other state is a strategy a small state may choose in addition to relying on its own resources.

East stresses one more important aspect in behaviour of small states which is based on the consideration that the typical behaviour of a small state is impulsive and direct, often even hostile. He identifies it as a high risk behaviour. According to East, a small state is not able to trace the problem in time because of the lack of resources and, hence, is not able to prevent it. The result is aggravation of situation and possible aggressive reaction. Here lies the difference in decision-making approach of small and big states. When being engaged in problem solving in the last moment, small states often behave direct and impulsive, exposing themselves to danger (East 1973: 557).

Due to the limited resources and relatively little power small states tend to avoid high risk foreign policy activities and focus on common activities, including regional cooperation and membership in international organizations (Jundzis 1996a: 4).

Limited resources is the reason why a small state is often cautious in using its political capital and uses it only in situations where its vital interests are at stake. It makes a small state to narrow the range of problems that could be addressed. It is logically that domestic and regional issues will be on the top of the agenda of a small state rather than the global ones such as, for example, global warming. However, unwillingness to be left outside the world decision – making process explains why membership in international organizations is often the top priority in the foreign policy of small states.

Small states tend to compensate their unequal position with the help of international law. Small states appeal to moral principles and norms more often than middle- and big powers. This strategy is often used as a main tool in the hands of a small state when addressing international problems (Jundzis 1996a: 4).

1.4. Security concept and its meaning in the foreign policy of small states.

It is difficult to define security concept and even more difficult to measure it. Generally we can see that security level in international politics often is bounded to nonexistence of insecurity. "Security" is a concept that can change its nature. Security concept refers to defence of vital values in generally, not only to military threats against or military defence from them (Kjølberg et al 2001: 18). According to Buzan and Wæver a security issue refers to the threat to the survival of some referent object, in our case, nation state, which is claimed to have right to survive (Buzan et al 2003:71).

Securing the existence, sovereignty, national identity and territorial integrity of a state as well as avoidance of military conflicts is considered to be the main foreign policy objectives not only for small, but also for big states and powers. Security could be examined in a few dimensions, depending on the analysing unit: security of a single individual, national, regional and international security.

According to Buzan security is influenced by many factors in five main sectors: military, political, economical, social and environmental. In a military field security refers mainly to interaction between military potential of states (which could be used both to offence and protection) and how states perceive the intentions of each other.

Security in political field refers to organizational stability, administration system and ideology. Security in economic field refers to availability of resources, market and finances which are necessary for prosperity of state and maintenance of state power on the susceptible level.

Social security is related to securing the traditional culture, language and national identity. Security is multishaped and varies depending on situations and conditions which the concept refers to. The integral notion of state security is to secure sovereignty (Buzan 2000: 117).

Sovereignty which is the main element of existence of state, determines its position in the international system. Duner defines sovereignty as "formal or juridical right to establish laws and to act in a certain geographical area or functional space". The main attention is paid to formal aspects of sovereignty which often differs, especially when it comes to small states. If formally a state is a sovereign unit, in reality sovereignty of every state more or less depends on domestic resources and the environment (Bleiere et al 1996:34).

Autonomy concept is used in order to characterize qualitative aspect of sovereignty. In general, autonomy refers to an ability of a state to influence other states in order to implement its national interests or an ability to implement its goals. Autonomy of small states is limited and is determined by the following factors: resources small state has in its disposition, domestic situation and limitations, which derives from international system. Small states are often more sensitive to external political and economic pressure than the big ones due to limited resources. It has to be noted that involvement in international organizations in most cases requires a part of

sovereignty. However, mutual cooperation between states could be carried out without the damage to such a sensitive for small states issue as sovereignty.

Security concept has two dimensions: the first one is related to preserving of sovereignty of a state and ensuring national existence as well as territorial integrity and the ability of authorities to act successfully. The second dimension is related to attempts to reduce the risk of armed conflict and endowing low level of tension among the states (Jundzis 1997b:58). Autonomy limitations lead to asymmetry in interstate relations. These limitations are related to the difference of potential and unbalanced politics of a weaker state, limited resources and insufficient economic development. In order to secure high degree of autonomy the establishment of symmetry is sufficient.

A small state neighbouring big one will always be a subject to asymmetrical relations, hence, to threat risk. It confirms an assertion that it will be gradually more difficult for a small state to prevent threats. It is not possible to eliminate the asymmetry entirely, thus ways to prevent the growth of asymmetry and thereby threats, is of importance for a small state.

Peaceful co-existence of a small and a big state is possible if the following conditions are fulfilled:

- 1) small state is strategically unimportant to a big state;
- 2) stable democracy in both states, especially in a big state.

Foreign policy implementation of a big state towards a smaller neighbouring state is often an exercise of political power which derives from a substance of a big state. That is why small states are searching for options to increase security guarantees. If a state is admitted and "feels" small in comparison with its neighbour, and in addition recognizes limitation of own resources, an element of insecurity will be present. This justifies an assumption that small states tend to cooperate in order to multiply resources and get in their disposition security guaranteeing tools.

1.5. Cooperation within the regional security framework: benefits of small states.

Region formation is one of the dominating tendencies in the international system today. Region formation is a global phenomenon – deepening of regional cooperation and regional engagement is a distinctive feature of international system. Increasing number of actors in international system is among the reasons why regional cooperation is developing. Another possible explanation is that many ambitions states have could be easily accomplished cooperating on the regional level than on the global one.

Region concept refers to a specific formation which combines totality of both internal and external conditions and elements. Despite the variety of definitions of the the term region, it is possible to trace some similarities. A region usually has four features: geographical closeness, common links (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, social and historic), interaction in international level and awareness of identity (Cantori et al: 1970). According to Buzan and Wæver region refers ”to the level where states or other units link together sufficiently likely that their securities cannot be considered separate from each other” (Buzan et al 2003: 43). In general, a region is a creation formed by state or non state actors between which an interaction takes place in one or few spheres and which are unified by the common objectives and means to gain those objectives as well as by territorial closeness.

A region is a creation where few states accumulate their resources, thus increasing options to gain influence on the global level. Region security cooperation anticipates coopeartion among a group of geographically bounded states concerning security issues. Regional ccooperation allows to strenghten security of a state by accumulating resources without limiting its autonomy. This fact is considered to be important especially for small states to which both abovementioned questions are of great importance.

In a multipolar system opportunities for cooperation have increased. New ways to fulfil objectives have opened and regional cooperation is considered to be one of the means to strengthen positions in international arena and influence international agenda. For a small state region is an opportunity both to develop without losing autonomy and strengthen security positions as well as to multiply resources and the means to prevent possible threats.

Not only states play an important role in regional cooperation. Also nongovernmental organizations, movements and institutions became active actors on the regional level. With the help of a region strategically beneficial positions could be gained in the international arena. Thus, it could be said, that the driving forces of regionalism are the groups of actors that mutually cooperate on the regional level in order to get an opportunity to realize their interests on the international level. It is of special importance to those small states which have low capacity to influence international agenda by their own means.

Regionalism is a process in which social (language, cultural, historical, religious, common historical self-confidence), economical (trade models), political (regimes, ideology) and organizational (formal regional institute) homogeneity is forming; which results in strengthening mutual dependence (Ozoliņa 2000e: 43).

Regionalism gives the opportunity to develop mutually overlapping power structures. It is a sufficient feature because an overlapping power network opens to a small state the possibility to influence international system. The region does not exclude existence of national interests and international involvement at the same time. The clearer the objectives have actors engaged in region formation, the better they recognize factors that have impact on the region formation, and the greater opportunity region has to gain maximum results from participation on the international level. The advantage of regional cooperation is that actors have the possibility to choose participation areas according to the objectives they set and avoid

unwanted involvement in common arrangements, as it is in the case of alliances where all members have to participate in collective defence arrangements.

There are few stages in region formation process. In the beginning states develop mutual relations; then cooperation/interaction in the particular area develops such as, for example, security field (so called sectoral interaction) which in the future develops in multilateral interaction. After strengthening relations, cooperation passes to the next level – integration. However, regional cooperation does not always lead to integration. Necessary precondition for integration is goal oriented behaviour of states and their disposition to cooperate.

Due to globalization process region borders become vaguer and cooperation among several partners in order to gain maximum results with minimum resources is usual phenomenon. Geographic location serves more as an attraction tool, then as a strict precondition of one or another political unit (Ozoliņa 1999c: 11).

International environment plays crucial role in region formation. It is possible to notice interconnection between the increasing number of regions and transformations that take place in the international system. Multipolarity that occurred after the Cold War is the brightest example of how states react to changes in the international system. Common interests, objectives, which consolidate region actors, as well as similar value systems and level of political culture, are considered to be the necessary preconditions for effective regional cooperation (Ozoliņa 1999d: 11). Common features, such as similar political systems, historical experience and value systems states share positively influence decision - making and implementation process. It could be explained with the fact, that the greater is unity among the states, the greater is the feedback. It should be mentioned that security sustaining is considered to be a conjunctive objective especially for the small states because very often it is the top foreign policy priority for them.

Regional cooperation is associated not only with positive but also with some negative tendencies. Tight interstate cooperation on regional level on particular issues may become a cause of conflict among the states that carries out regional cooperation and states outside the region. States outside the region could have a perception that regional cooperation might be oriented against them. As an example could be mentioned Russia's reaction to events in Baltic region. Attempts of the Baltic states to develop interstate cooperation on issues of strategic importance were kept under sharp – eyed observation of Russia.

Regional cooperation could be also negatively influenced also by insufficient experience of states to cooperate. It may become apparent when it comes to financial aspects of cooperation such as expenditures and investments. This aspect is especially painful to new states which have difficulties to decide whether to engage in regional cooperation or not due to the lack of financial resources. Another reason which could hinder region formation is mistrust to a neighbouring state if a negative historical experience took place.

Great concerns are linked to economic aspect. States may not be interested to cooperate on the regional level because they plan to strengthen economy by their own means. A competition is a part of market economy where individuality is preferred. Regionalism, in its term, foresees some kind of joint action in which investments should be made. Small states could fear to become economically dependent on the bigger states (Moshes 2002).

Sovereignty could become an obstacle for regional cooperation but on the other hand, it could become a stimulus, proposition for region formation or engagement in it. Thus, it is necessary to turn to an assumption, that aspiration to secure sovereignty could lead to region formation or engagement in regional cooperation.

A small state, when developing national identity and independent position, often needs support from outside. If a state is not confident about its strength, it searches for

the opportunities to strengthen its position with the help of other actors in the international system. As security is on the top of agenda especially for states which feel threatened, one of the possible solutions is to form a so-called security region. Main conditions for security region formation derive from the international environment where particular state is located. International system in general and surrounding international environment determine conditions for region formation and has direct influence on the objectives of the (Ozoliņa 1999b: 12). It should be stressed that regional balance of power and adequacy and recognition of the goals brought forward by the region actors is sufficient.

Motives for security region formation could be different. To mention the most common:

- region formation as an alternative to more extensive formation among states in security field;
- security region as an addition to existent security policy;
- region formation as a spring point in order to achieve large-scale goals;
- membership in international organizations, where a particular level of preparedness is required.

1.6. Security community.

Karl Deutsch mention two types of security communities: the amalgamated security community which is based on confluence of sovereign states into a single unit and the pluralistic security community where member states maintain their sovereignty (Deutsch: 1957). As the main objects of the analysis are the Baltic states which are sovereign units, further examination of security community will be limited to pluralistic type of security community. According to Deutsch the main requirement of pluralistic security community is that "the keeping of the peace among the participating units was the main political goal overshadowing all others" (Deutsch 1957: 31). Adler and Barnett also note that stable peace is the

distinctive feature of a security community and while states form a security community to exhibit rivalry and other interactions associated with mixed-motive games, they no longer fear the use of violence as a mean of statescraft and a tool to settle mutual disputes. They also point out that mutual trust and collective identity are the important elements in creating security community. As security community is a peace community, the establishment of pluralistic security community, which is a non – war community, anticipates that mutual military fears are absent at the state – to – state level (Adler et al 1998). According to Kasowicz, common identities, values and norms is a precondition of peace in a security community, making it more institutionalized (Kasowicz 1994). This distinctive feature justifies the view that sharing identities and meanings produces peace. In the case of Europe democratic values are at the core of the security community. Thus, establishment of security community is important for states because with establishment of such a community they do not need to fear of being an object of military aggression. Not to mention that democracies do not tend to fight against each other. It is particularly relevant for the small states due to their limited resources, including the military ones.

Another benefit for a small state being a part of security community is that it appears as a full-fledged actor in the international arena. It is considerably more difficult to reach this status acting individually taking into account such factor as limited resources. That is why striving for cooperation is logical behaviour of small states. One of the most effective means to find the place in the international system for a small state is through regional cooperation; by joining resources with other states increases its ability to influence and compete in the international arena. Regional cooperation could be a transitional step to integration into international organizations.

Continuing the analysis, advantages of a small state taking part in regional cooperation should be examined. Supporter of regionalism LeRoy Bennett stresses that tendency towards regional cooperation among small groups of neighboring states which share homogeneous interests, traditions and value system is obvious. Small states located in one geographic area theoretically have tendency to cooperate and

cooperation increases if states in addition have similar goals to reach in the international arena. Small and weak states have tendency to cooperate more often than strong or big states, which are able to insure realization of interests individually. In addition, balance of power could be maintained when states form regional groups, thus retaining world's stability (Le Roy Bennett 1988: 350).

The next aspect is that there is no global authority which would be able to control world order as it functions on domestic level. Region could be a subsystem where there is a possibility to test interaction among states and possibility to reach consensus in different questions, including security issues.

In relation to threat it is worth mentioning that states located in one geographic area tend to perceive local threats more seriously and consider them of equal importance than those, located far from the source of threat. Despite that nowadays the possibility of direct threats has decreased, such factors as pressure from big neighbouring state or economic instability could become a motive to initiate regional cooperation.

Political, economic and social integration could be easily reached within limited geographic area. Regional integration could serve as a spring point for small states on their way to global integration: regional integration provides with experience how to cooperate as well as with greater ability to influence decision – making process on the international arena due to joined diplomatic, economic or military resources.

1.7. Security policy strategies of the small states.

After the end of the Cold War in the international system have occurred significant changes. Bipolar system was replaced by multipolar system which is considered to be more unstable than the bipolar one. Actors in the international system have to maintain security by their own means because in contrast to the domestic level there is

no collective institution which would provide security to all the members of international community.

Security dilemma is the following – in order to maintain their security states enlarge which makes other states feel threatened. In a case if a small state becomes a member of an alliance or lean on support of a stronger state in order to maintain its security, there is a risk to lose a part of its autonomy.

Security policy of small states reflects efforts to ensure security interests and influence international system. Changes in geopolitical situation on the one hand lead to a negative reaction of small states because of their limited ability to influence, but, on the other hand widen possibility for cooperation and facilitate formation and development of international organizations. In each specific situation it finds an expression differently, but following geopolitically determined factors have influence on security policy of a small state:

- if from the point of view of the big state a small state is located in strategic important position;
- if a small state is strategically important or natural resources located on the territory of a small state attract attention of other states;
- if a small state is located close to big or middle state (Ozoliņa 1996a:53).

Geographical closeness requires high interaction level between states and differences in power capacities influence security of small states. In this case security could be both increased and reduced: if a big state is friendly a small neighbouring state will not experience security challenges, and otherwise, if a big state is aggressive or internally unstable, it could threaten security of its neighbours, especially that of a small state. The situation could be complicated by the fact if negative historical experience took place in relations of two neighbouring states.

Despite the fact that small states are subjugated to the influence of international system and its influential actors to a greater extent than bigger states, small states also have

some mechanisms to influence in their disposition. What strategy a small state will choose: to rely on its own political, military, economic resources or to search for different kinds of cooperation with other states (as for example joining an alliance) will depend on the existence of external threats and how those threats are perceived on the domestic level.

The realities of the world politics have to be kept in mind when a small state chooses foreign policy strategy. It has to be cautious when using its political capital due to limited resources. That is why it must use it only in situations where its vital interests are at stake.

Membership in international organizations has its costs and benefits. States have different threat perceptions and depending on their geopolitical location have different security challenges. In addition, domestic factors, such as political and ideological basis play an important role in formulating foreign policy strategy. Membership in international organizations is among the priorities of the foreign policy of small states because it allows to put the burden on national security matters to transnational level. However, membership has its costs and benefits which should be examined closer.

NATO is still seen as the only organization which guarantees hard security and is able to protect in a case if military threats occur. The EU deals with semi – soft/semi-hard security issues. The EU is not an alternative to NATO because it lacks the US presence which is vital for European security (Setälä 2004). For new, small and weak states, such were the Baltic states after gaining independence, both "soft" and "hard" security was of importance. However, traditional "hard" security was on the top of the agenda due to the neighbourhood of Russia and the possibility of commencement of a military conflict.

States, especially small ones, when moving deliberately and determined towards membership in a military alliance, want to increase their security and power potential. Membership in alliance brings not only military benefits. Economic benefits in return

for loyalty in a form of subsidies and possible investments opens for new states an opportunity to improve and develop defence sector. Political benefits from joining an alliance for small states comes in a form of possibility to take part and influence decision – making process in the international arena in a self - favourable ways. It should be stressed that satisfaction from joining "the club" is an important factor for newly independent small states which make their first independent steps in international arena. However, security aspect is the most important for most states when appraising membership in alliance (Kjølberg: 18).

The rules of the game define that membership in alliance means not only to get help, but also to help other members if a threat to their security occurs. Contribution to common security arrangements when necessary are required. Absence of common threats does not mean the absence of crises and conflict situations at all. Concerning NATO, new security challenges and threats caused the necessity for new means and methods. It required transformation and acquisition of new capabilities for the Alliance. Exactly small states often have problems in transforming their capabilities due to limited material and human resources. These problems could be solved with the help of other member states. However, it can increase dependence of a small state on other, often bigger nation.

2. External environment of the Baltic states.

Insecurity is one of the main features of small, weak states and should be examined in the context of external environment. These states are especially sensitive to features created by geopolitical situation which could both improve and worsen security situation of small states and their ability influence international processes.

A situation when "totality of external factors is especially important when a small state with limited resources and insufficient experience to act on the international arena search a place in interstate system and in addition is located close to a big state which maintains a model of behaviour of former empire and at the same time attempts to build democratic society structures" (Ozoliņa 2000e: 80) could be referred to the Baltic states.

An international environment of the Baltic states is formed by Russia and Commonwealth of Independent States (further CIS), Baltic Sea region and Western democratic states.

2.1. Power poles¹.

In order to evaluate the place three Baltic states occupied in the international politics during the examined period, it is important to realize the system of relations in which they operated.

During the Cold War the world was divided into two spheres of influence controlled by two superpowers, the USA and the USSR, thus creating two confronting ideological, economical, political and military blocks, between which the "iron curtain" (*a line of political division*) was dropped and international system was considered as bipolar. Moscow and Washington were two power poles with global attainability effect.

¹ Power pole is a place from which political power is distributed to outside and which is defined as an ability to force someone to do something, what otherwise this „other“ have not been done. Tools which are used to obtain this are very different, for example, warfare which is used rarely, assaults or promises of rewards.

The end of 1980's, the beginning of 1990's was a meaningful period in European security system because of the collapse of the bipolar system: disappearance of the threat source – the USSR, two parallel international systems – socialism and capitalism – ceased to exist. Thus, Europe went into new quality which is linked to consequences of the collapse of the bipolar model. Important changes that took place in Germany (*unified Germany with claims to become Europe's strongest economical and political power*), Eastern Europe (*new political attempts of former socialist states and rebirth of nationalism and xenophobia*), USSR (*political stagnation and economic bankruptcy, but still preserving great military strength*) opened possibility to search for new cooperation forms (Hyde – Price 1992:38).

Bipolar model of balance of power anticipates that two great powers dominate in the international system, and each of them controls its own part of the globe. Thus, the world was divided among the two opposite poles which nonetheless were interlinked because constantly kept the activities of the other under careful observation and reacted to them immediately. High armament and confrontation level was a distinctive feature of the bipolar model. According to historical experience, bipolar model existed since the end of the second World War (1947-1989). The basic principle of the bipolar system opened to the USA the door to Europe since Europe was controlled by two super powers – the Soviet Union and the USA. During the existence of this model peace was maintained thus creating relative conditional stability. The Marshall plan created by the USA anticipated economic cooperation among the states. That is why the necessity for institutionalized economic community became clear, thus determining the creation of mutual interdependence in the later years.

Present reality of international relations present the evidence that return to bipolar world division is unlikely. Although one of the poles which is concentrated around NATO, is not going to collapse in the near future, though there is no other equivalent power in the world which in perspective could create second, diametrically opposed pole.

Security policy is linked to the formulating of security problem, which anticipates choosing the means of solving the security problems or eliminating the threats. During the Cold War it was possible to identify the source of threat very precisely since it was an external enemy from the opposite block of states and the bipolar system was dominated by the military threats. After the collapse of the bipolar system situation has changed.

Bipolar system disappeared with the end of the Cold War accordingly radically changing international system in Europe. Former Western and Eastern Europe have lost its identity; power poles and their influence have changed. Dynamic increase of economic and military integration took place in Europe; the EU gathered around itself new member states. Thus, Brussels attained status of the power pole because of its status as the EU political center, but Moscow lost a great part of its power to influence.

After the end of the Cold War it became possible to speak about the creation of "new order" in the international structure. Common regional, economic, political and military interests and goals arose as a result of intensive cooperation in different world regions. Regions in this "new order" system act as independent actors and the role of international organizations is increasing.

2.2. *Russia.*

Insecurity of the Baltic states was strengthened by the fact that all three Baltic states protractedly were the members of the USSR. Due to unsuccessful experience the Baltic states had, Russia was viewed as neighbour which behaviour is difficult to predict. High corruption level, great external debts, economic instability and democracy deficit was the distinctive features of Russia during the period examined in the thesis. Although in Northern Europe there was no actual risk of warfare, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, being small not so much geographically as demographically and economically, were located near to the former great power. Despite that its meaning as a great power in the world decreased, Russia still had great

nuclear potential. Thus, the Baltic states had a reasonable ground to search for security guarantees in European and transatlantic security structures in addition to own means. Since Russia is a part of Europe, its involvement in the European and the world's processes could be viewed as a positive fact that strengthened regional stability, also because of its great political influence.

In their attempts to gain membership in NATO, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were taking into consideration actual NATO – Russia relations. However, at the same time they considered that these relations must not hinder their integration into NATO as well as to become an obstacle to gradual improving of relations with Russia. NATO representatives have repeatedly stressed that Russia has no determining role in NATO enlargement, and, the more negatively Moscow will react to potential membership of the Baltic states in the Alliance, the more it will hinder its integration into international turnover. Russia made it clear that NATO expansion to its borders is not acceptable. Determined aspiration of the Baltic states to become the members of the Alliance was perceived as a signal, that Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania are searching for own place in the international arena, avoiding to arrive in the sphere of influence of Russia. Drafted in 1999 „Research of Russia's Nongovernmental defence and foreign policy council” contained the view that ”due to rapid NATO enlargement towards the Baltic states, Russia will consider this fact as increase of direct military threat”. The research stressed that „there is no real security guarantee to the Baltic states without friendly Russia” (Pētersons 1999).

Opposition of Russia was the biggest political obstacle to the Baltic membership in NATO. Its sharp negative position against the expansion of the Alliance towards east and the answer to the question whether admission of the Baltic states into Alliance will increase or decrease security in Europe means that the Baltic states always would have to take into account real relations between NATO and Russia (Jundzis 2000c). Western European politicians were confident that relations of Russia towards NATO would hinder integration of the Baltic states into the Alliance.

During the examined period NATO and Russia collaborated in parliamentary level in fight against international terrorism, organized crime, distribution of weapons of mass distruction as well as in organizing searching and rescue and peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. Russia is one of associated member states in NATO parliamntary assmebly with the right to vote.

3. Near international environment of the Baltic Sea region.

Cooperation within region framework is an additional element of the global security process. Baltic Sea region states (Ozoliņa 2000e) are brought together by their geographical location around the Baltic Sea which create stable totality of interaction and interests. Not only interstate cooperation takes place within the regional framework, but also sub-national one: Union of the Baltic cities, business cooperation etc. Active support of Nordic countries – Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland to the long-term democratic development in the Baltic states have turned the Baltic Sea region into unifying and cooperation – promoting environment. Cooperation among these states developed in different formats – cooperation among the Baltic states, cooperation among the Baltic and Nordic countries as well as Baltic Sea Council of which Russia, Germany and Poland is a part. The aim of the cooperation is to promote development and to increase regional and wherewith European stability. However, the Baltic Sea region is not still considered a security community because of Russia, as a state, which does not share with the other region states common identity, values and norms and is not considered a part of the European security community.

Security community is a peace community which presupposes that a war between community members is not possible. However, Russia still had an imperial ambitions and there was still a possibility for military conflict. It justifies an assumption that the Baltic Sea region could not be considered a security community during the period examined in the thesis.

According to Mouritzen, after the end of the Cold War two security communities existed in Europe – the Nordic security community and the EU security community. He points out, however, that there was no essential difference in the functioning of the Nordic and the EU security communities “for this reason, it is question of no practical relevance whether one regards the Nordic security community of today as an integral part of the EU community or as a community of its own” (Mouritzen 2001: 303). The

main question was whether a security community, a creation of stable peace because of community and identity (Adler et al 1998) could be established on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic states did not form a security community despite the fact that its hard to imagine them fighting against each other using military means although some territorial disputes existed between them. As resolving territorial disputes was among the preconditions for joining the EU, the Baltic states were able to manage this, which can not be said about the disputes of the same nature with the bigger neighbour – Russia.

When we speak about the Baltic identity, it was very much an image created by West and the Balts never opposed to it partly to meet Western expectations and partly to separate itself from Russia and the sphere of influence of Moscow. There was also almost non-existent possibility of war between the Baltic and any of the Western countries. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania followed the formula “We belong to Europe, and Europe end here” (Mouritzen 2001: 305). The main security goals of three Baltic states were integration into NATO and the EU and it could be said that their membership would justify the view that they are a part of the Euro-Atlantic security community.

Russia’s present continued to influence international security climate in the Baltic Sea region. Other states in the region could not ignore its presence in the region and had to take into account that its interests are not limited only to regional level but include the whole Baltic Sea region. It should be stressed that none of the states in the Baltic Sea region threatened the security of Russia or security of the region. However, Russia considered NATO enlargement within the region to be a threat to its security. Enlargement meant that the Baltic states “will make it to the West” (Buzan et al 2003: 415) and become a part of the Europe security community of which Russia is not a part of. For the Baltic states, which were searching for security quarantees since their indepenedence was restored, establishment of security

community in the Baltic Sea region could mean firm security guarantees in addition to the guarantees NATO and the EU could give. However, no powerful regional security organization with strong commitments that would cover the entire Baltic Sea region was created. Despite this, a network of cooperative security existed in the abovementioned region, an example being the Council of Baltic Sea States (hereafter CBSS). CBSS was created in March 1992. Member states of CBSS are: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland.

CBSS is called a regional organization, but, taking into account its conference type, nature and narrow specificity of discussed issues, it is more correctly to call it multilateral initiative. Establishment of CBSS was an attempt to promote stability in the region but at the same time it is not a regional security organization. Baltic Sea states have different security solutions. In this situation it was not possible to form CBSS as a security institution for all states forming the Baltic Sea. Infrastructural, cultural, ecological cooperation within CBSS was emphasized. The implementation of regional projects, promoting of regional connections, etc. was important. Implementation of regional projects, promotion of regional connections, etc. was of importance. Though, the fact that CBSS was not created as regional security organization, did not exclude an opportunity to discuss security related matters, related to environment, fight against crime etc., in which the Baltic Sea region states had common interests. Despite the short time of existence, the Baltic Sea region became a region of high stability. The EU reckones with CBSS and it is important that exactly European Commission was the main source of financing of this project.

CBSS had very high political importance because of the fact that Russian and Baltic representatives were able to sit at one table and discuss different issues (they do so also in the United Nations (UN) and Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), but not in such a narrow format).

CBSS ministerial sessions showed that also security issues are being successfully discussed. For example, in March 2002 in Svetlogorsk, Russia, was completed a ministers' session, which was a retrospect to what has been done and discussion of the future priorities. The following cooperation spheres were highlighted in the declaration: fight against organized crime, cooperation in civil defence and prevention of non-military threats in the region, development of Northern dimension policy, economic cooperation. It confirms, that the Baltic states were solving their domestic security problems before integration into NATO not only within the trilateral cooperation framework, but more broadly – within the Baltic Sea region framework, which supposedly was more effective because “the Baltic Sea region was considered as one of the most stable in terms of security and rapidly developing regions in Europe and in the world” (Galdikaite 2003: 17).

3. 1. International organizations.

New security environment in Europe after the end of the Cold War with the new risks lead to transformation and development of international security organizations. International organizations were occupied with searching for new roles and tasks which they could implement in the future European security architecture, as well as for cooperation opportunities with other international security organizations in Europe.

After the end of the Cold War, international society, maintaining stability and security, created mutually integrated network of international security organizations, so - called Euroatlantic security structure.

International security which is based on cooperation, could be described as a strategic system with the core which is mutually related to official and non - official community and institutional network of liberal democratic states with common values. These states implement practical and “transparent” cooperation in economical, political and military sphere. Within the borders of security system, objectives of simple states in national security sphere are linked with four security “rings” or

circles, which strengthen the whole system. The first “ring” (individual security) – observation of human rights and defence within and outside state borders; the second “ring” (collective security) – maintenance of peace and stability in common space; the third “ring” (collective defence) – collective defence against external aggression; the fourth “ring” (distribution of stability) – an active stability ensuring in other regions, where ongoing conflicts could create threat to a common security, using political, economic and if necessary, military means. If we accept such system, then it must be admitted, that NATO remain the most effective because it is able to secure all four functions, in contrast to the EU, OSCE and the UN which do not guarantee their memberstates military protection against external aggression (Коэн 2001).

The international security environment in Europe during the examined period was significantly influenced by the integration processes which found an expression in deepening of the EU integration and admittance of new member states, as well as NATO enlargement. A great part of European states was involved in transatlantic cooperation based which was based on common democratic values. NATO and the USA had leading positions in the field of collective security. NATO and the EU enlargement was a stabilizing factor in security system which resulted in the extension of the region within which stable and democratic political and economic development is guaranteed.

Integration into the EU and NATO protractedly has been top foreign and security policy objectives of the Baltic states. However, it required diligent preparations with complicated review of development process. Both these organizations create the core of European security structure. Both the EU and NATO were significant to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania because the Baltic states wanted to address their security problems together with similarly thinking states and to obtain security against possible threats with common forces. Even more, integration into NATO and the EU was associated with return to “West” and European way of life, prosperity and security (Urbelis 2003b).

With the help of international organizations small states can obtain internationalization of their security interests, they may widely use law and moral norms in order to influence other actors in the international system. During the examined period, integration processes in Europe developed dynamically and it is important to stress that security of the Baltic states was inseparable from that of European. Together with restoring of independence in the beginning of 1990's, integration into Euroatlantic political, economic and security organizations, such as UN, OSCE, Western European Union (WEU) became an integral part of the policy of the Baltic states.

On May 9, 1994 the Baltic states, together with other 6 Central European and East European states, were granted status of the associated partners of the WEU which is fully integrated into the EU.

For the Baltic states integration into the EU was an essential precondition for economic growth, democracy and prosperity, as well as for increasing of international security guarantees. The membership in the EU for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania meant even more because of the globalization processes in the world due to their awareness that they as small states with limited resources would not be able to engage in competition struggle and survive in the world which is lead by economic megasystems. The EU is not an alliance and can not guarantee security to its members as NATO does. However, it is a democratically created community where member states share common values and interests. Cooperation on internal affairs and justice is developing within the EU which opened an opportunity to new member states to solve internal security problems, fight against crime and smuggling more effectively.

The EU is not a military union. For that reason, security guarantees which three Baltic states expected to receive, were not direct, military guarantees. Security provided by the EU membership strives mainly from the self fact of existence of the Union. The EU is the union of European most influential and richest states. It passed time probation and gained reputation and influence which makes it for one of the main

actors in the world politics. Simultaneously both inside and outside the EU, it has been stressed, that the Union needs clear manifestation of common political will in foreign policy and security related issues which would correspond to economic influence of this organization. Such an instrument is the EU Common foreign and security policy (CFSP) – one of three pillars the EU is based on.

“Security project has always been and is still the basis of the EU. As an actor in security field, the EU does not correspond to any of traditional definition of this concept. It is not based on balance of power principle, not on the hegemony or a big power or collective defence. The most appropriate description of its role could be in its goal to ensure cooperative common security” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden 1997: 11). Despite that the core of the EU project is economy, it is a meaningful security project for Europe and does not correspond to any of traditional security systems. However, in principle, it supports security model which is based on the interregional balance of power.

Without doubt, membership in the EU has a positive influence on small states. It creates security community in Europe – situation, when a war is not considered to be a mean against the other state. It leads to stability and widens the space for political action of small states and prevents conflict situations between the big powers in western Europe. Cooperation within the framework of the EU is important in war against terrorism, international crime and illegal immigration. Despite the fact that the EU works on increasing its military capacity, it still has the central role in producing non-military security. The EU still has a long way to go to become a significant military power. That is why the Baltic states bordering big, unstable state with imperial ambitions as Russia is, considered NATO as the only provider of “hard” security against possible military threats.

NATO is an important part of new Euroatlantic space. During the last ten years the Alliance has cooperated practically with all European states which are not its members. NATO views its relations with Russia important because long-lasting peace

in Europe could be maintained only if Russia will build new type relations with other states.

It is important that Washington treaty does not anticipate any concrete enemy. Its attractiveness lies in Paragraph 5 which states that an armed attack against any of its member states to be considered as an attack to all its member states. NATO is considered to be the most effective and react – able international organization and Paragraph 5 declares the substance and strength of the Alliance. There are few basic tasks NATO has in the security field: maintaining of stable and non-changing security environment in Europe; remaining a consultation forum for its member states in addressing international issues and in cases when international events encompasses security risk for NATO member states; organization of self-defence and prevention of any kind aggression against any of its member states.

The influence of a member state in international organization depends on its political will to influence and on its contribution to operations (Setälä 2004). Each member state has the opportunity to comment on issues before they are forwarded to the next level in the hierarchy of the Alliance, thus, ensuring presence of the small states at the table where decisions on international matters are made. Big powers do not always agree on all issues which mean that coalitions are formed within the Alliance. This increases opportunities of the small states to influence the agenda. It is an important factor for the small Baltic states especially when it comes to the matters relating to Russia, as this question is of a strategic importance for the three states.

In a case of the Baltic states, each of them first of all was concerned about ensuring own security and at the same time demonstrating its loyalty to the USA/NATO on individual level, often competing with each other. The recognition that playing in one team and merging political will and resources would increase their possibility to influence came later.

Without doubt, bigger nations do have more influence over international matters than the small ones does. However, it is a great benefit for a small state to be at the table where decisions are made. That is why membership in the EU and NATO could have been used as a tool to consolidate a nation as a sovereign and legitimate entity in international politics and made it visible on the maps of great powers (Setälä 2004).

Membership in international organization has its costs and benefits. In order to get benefits a state has to make its contribution. Speaking about NATO, participation in international operations which are important to the USA/NATO could be considered as an important tool to show loyalty to the Alliance and prove that an actor is ready to take the responsibility to share concerns about collective security. The benefit is the conviction that in a case if a threat to a member state occurs, it will get necessary help from the other members. Thus, it is in the interests of the member states to contribute despite the consequences membership brings on domestic level; basically, it means that it is important not to be a “free rider” (Kjølberg).

The absence of the common threat after the end of the Cold War made NATO to search for a new role in the international environment. First of all the desire of the USA to continue using NATO as a central security policy institution and as a pool of its military power could explain the survival of the Alliance. Expansion eastwards, in its turn, could be seen as a part of the transformation process.

Enlargement has brought the Alliance to the borders of the Baltic states. Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia were seen inseparable despite the different levels of readiness to become members of NATO. However, the Baltic states had different opinion regarding this issue. Lithuania posed not as a Baltic state, but as a Central European state and sought unilateral entry to European organizations forsaking Latvia and Estonia. Estonia was following suit regarding its future entry into the EU and supported admitting at least one Baltic state into NATO so that others might later gain a hearing. NATO in its turn, had a recognition that only taking all three countries together with their joint resources could be beneficial for the Alliance. That is the

explanation why all three Baltic countries became was an important issue on the agenda of the USA and Europe.

However, admitting them into NATO was one of the most difficult problems for the Alliance because of the opposition posed by Russia. It should be mentioned that internal divisions in NATO on this issue also took place. Who was the driving force of the enlargement process despite the costs it caused? Celeste Wallander argues that the leadership of the USA and determination to remain present in the European security through NATO as well as dissatisfaction of the existence of even smallest prospect that Russia could emerge as threat was the reason why USA remained committed (Wallander 2000: 721).

As NATO enlarged and approached the borders of the Baltic states, it faced security challenges in contemporary Europe. While the Baltic states were seeking for membership in NATO, Russia was showing dissatisfaction and stressing that outcome when NATO expands to its borders, is unacceptable. Russia even threatened to break cooperation with the West. The apparent irreconcilability in the positions of NATO and Russia, and the insistence of the Baltic states upon consideration for their security interests, obliged both East and West to collaborate on working out a security system for the region that respects both Russian and Baltic, not to mention Western, interests. Otherwise, this region could have become the flashpoint of a political conflict with possible future development into a military one (Blank 1997).

Baltic security was seen as part of European security and Baltic security is inseparable due to geopolitical and historical facts. This could serve as an explanation why Washington, as a central NATO player, took leadership in a process of enlargement despite the costs it brought and internal disputes on this issue. In return NATO wanted loyal members, which would not be only security "importers", but also security "exporters". It was clear that each Baltic state alone is not ready to become such "exporter" due to the lack of resources and difficulties the defence sectors were undergoing due to the reforms. It was in the interests of NATO to make defence

structures of the Baltic states to meet its standards in order to make all three applicants qualified for membership.

Another difficulty European and the US government met because of the intention of the Baltic states to become members of the EU and NATO, was deterring Russian threats. Russia opposed the Baltic membership in NATO because considered that the expansion of the Alliance expansion to its borders threatens its interests. While not being full-fledged members, NATO did not have an obligation to defend the Baltic states if they were attacked. However, after they became Partnership for Peace (PfP) members it could not simply wash its hands and ignore Baltic regional security issues. As Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia at that time were outside any European security system, basically there were two possibilities – to let them face the pressure Russia was bringing to bear, attempting to get them in its sphere of influence, or to help them to qualify for membership and get three loyal to the Alliance members. The first possible scenario could have brought pressure not only to small and weak Baltic states, but also to European security and possibly even lead to crisis. Therefore, in order to avoid such possibilities, western organizations were ready to meet covering costs in order to enhance Baltic security which once again should be stressed, is inseparable from European security. New member states were seen as sources of new capabilities to NATO. Their membership was seen as tool to shift focus of the Alliance from guaranteeing to defend from possible military threat to how potential members can help NATO in spreading democratic values around the world and share costs that bring participating in international operations (Setälä 2004).

Volker Ruhe, Germany's Minister of Defense, wrote that the Baltic states are the practical testing ground for meeting the challenges of reshaping NATO missions, territorial scope, the relations between the United States and its European allies, partnership with Russia, and, in general, for building Europe they want to see (Ruhe 1996: 33). On the other hand Washington recognized that if the United States will not lead in the formation of the Baltic (and European) security system other states will make deals without it and against its interests (Blank 1997).

When it comes to the Baltic states, they shared a common understanding about European and global integration processes and a place the region has in this process. Together with integration into NATO and the EU three Baltic states had common foreign and security policy goals – facilitating of integration into European and Transatlantic security and cooperation structures as well as integration of the region into Europe in general.

4. Mutual relations among the Baltic states and significance of cooperation.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are located in one geostrategic space. The three Baltic states are commensurable both quantitatively and qualitatively. The Baltic states were unified not only by the similar historical experience but also by the common future vision and common foreign and security policy objectives – successful integration into European and Transatlantic security and cooperation structures. The Baltic states viewed themselves as a part of Europe and had common understanding and attitude towards the matters concerning the factors of European and global integration.

The Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are small, weak states with limited resources and capacity to influence international politics. They were also economically and military underdeveloped states which recognized that are not able to obtain security only with their own forces. Both quantitative and qualitative commensurability existed among the Baltic states. That is why integration into the European security structures was on the top of the security policy agenda of three Baltic states.

The Baltic states had a limited power to influence international issues; they implemented cautious, low risk policy and simultaneously were searching for and using the available methods and means for multiplying international influence.

After disintegration of the Soviet Union, cooperation among the Baltic states started in the beginning of the 1990's after the so-called „singing revolution” which took place immediately after the restoration of independence in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

In May 1990 the Baltic states agreed on creation of the Cooperation Council of the Baltic states and signed ”Declaration on unanimity and cooperation among The Republic of Estonia, The Republic of Latvia and The Republic of Lithuania”. However, cooperation council has not been created. Primary common objectives of

the Baltic states were to attain withdrawal of the Russian army and to obtain permanent independence. In order to achieve abovementioned goals, the Baltic states were able to coordinate their activities and cooperate in the areas which was important for them.

After the "singing revolution" passed, an assumption that political cooperation, namely, cooperation at the state level, will be the next step which would replace cooperation among the popular movements, was perceived as the logical development of interstate relations among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Parliamentary cooperation institution – The Baltic Assembly which was created on November 8, 1991 played an important role in coordinating cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Somewhat later in July 13, 1994, the Baltic Council and The Baltic council of ministers was established, thus creating an institutional base for cooperation among three Baltic states. It should be mentioned that legislative framework for defence cooperation was created in a short period of time – from 1993-1995 a number of laws, regulations, defence and security concepts were adopted (Urbelis 2003b).

Russia could be considered as one of the most significant external factors that stimulated the cooperation among the Baltic states. Thanks to joint forces and help of international organizations, Russian army was withdrawn from Lithuania in 1993, but from Latvia and Estonia in 1994. In that way, objectives that initially had been brought forward, were fulfilled.

Despite the existence of such conjunctive factor as a negative Soviet legacy was, which united the Baltic republics during the first years after restoring their independence, each of the three states began to realize in the course of time that their own ways to face political realities have to be found. Thus, euphoria, which existed shortly after the independence was restored, made room for necessity of engineering own means for realization of national interests.

During the first years of independence the abilities of the Baltic states to implement foreign and security policies were limited due to insufficient diplomatic and economic resources as well as lack of experience. Launching of joint projects and was a reaction to limited international communication channels due to the lack of resources. The idea of Baltic unity was cultivated more outside Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania than it was in the three countries themselves because the Baltic states did not have any experience in terms of sub-regional cooperation (Ozoliņa 1999c). Thus, at first sub-regional cooperation was limited due to insufficient resources, than it began to put obstacles to it as three Baltic states began to take opportunities at the regional and global level more actively.

The desire to become members of western organizations and, thus, to expand the range of supporters was not the only factor that hampered interstate cooperation among the Baltic states. An absence of a distinct leader that could take responsibility for initiation and coordination of joint projects was among the main reasons why the tendency of cooperation decreasing was also present. Theoretically, Latvia could have taken a leader position as geographically it is located in the center of the Baltic states. In practice, the "Baltic unity" was very much an external image as the Baltic states choosed to emphasize their own significance on their way to the EU and NATO.

The cooperation among the Baltic states had a dual nature. On the one hand, interstate cooperation was seen at some point as an obstacle to reaching important goals – membership in western economic and military structures. In gaining these objectives, each country was searching for the methods which are the most appropriate particularly for it. At the same time, political realities and the fact, that in the eyes of international society the Baltic states were seen as inseparable unit, had positive influence on interstate cooperation. Joint projects such as BALTBAT, BALTRON, BALTDEFCOL is the evidence that cooperation among the three Baltic states was not only a myth.

On the one hand, closeness of Russia and its ambitions to maintain strict control over its so-called "near abroad" were the factors which had positive influence on, and broadened the opportunities for cooperation among the Baltic states. It could be explained by the fact, that so – called "Russia factor" brought about similar perception of threats to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Also the efforts to join NATO was a factor that broadened opportunities for cooperation among the Baltic states. On the other hand, competition was a concurrent part of interstate relations of the Baltic states when examining their way to Western security structures. Thus, it could be stated that Baltic cooperation developed unevenly and the dynamics of cooperation process have always been more dependent on external factors than on the internal ones (Ozoliņa 1999c).

Historical ties of Estonia and Lithuania with Finland and Poland was a significant external factor that had an influence on cooperation dynamics. Estonia which has strong economic and linguistic ties with economically strong and experienced democratic Finland, considered that it will gain more benefit from developing more intense cooperation with it than with the Baltic neighbours. When it comes to Lithuania, shortly after gaining its independence, it considered Latvia to be its closest partner. However, after resolving territorial disputes with its neighbour Poland with which it has historical ties, Lithuania turned to cooperate with it more intensively. As in the case with Estonia, economic factor played a sufficient role here, too. Central European market seemed more attractive than the Baltic one which is considerably smaller (Ozolina 1999d).

Latvian Professor of International relations Žanete Ozoliņa have stressed that "from the aspect of unity the initial stage of cooperation between the Baltics was the brightest and the most active, since the Baltic States were aware of sharing a common historical experience and common prospects for the future i.e. either all three would reclaim independence or they would be redrawn into a "new union""(Ozoliņa 1999b).

However, already in 1993, when parliamentary elections took place and foreign policy priorities were defined, it became clear that existing interstate cooperation among three Baltic states is not effective. As the EU and NATO membership were set as foreign policy priorities, cooperation among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in some extent was viewed as a factor that could hinder western institutions to see the progress each country have reached independently from its neighbours. Unexperienced Baltic states, highlighting own achievements, did not fully recognize that cooperation between them was viewed by western organizations as an indicator of how they will act when membership in the EU and NATO would become a *fait accompli*.

The year 1993 was a turning point for the Baltic cooperation after Copenhagen criteria of the EU were set. According to indicators which were set as a base for evaluating readiness of the country to become a member of this organization, Estonia took a leading place and was named among the first group of countries to begin membership negotiations with. This led to unequivocal reactions in all three Baltic states. This fact made understand that despite common historical experience and unity each has its own way to go in order to reach future objectives.

Competition became an integral part of the Baltic interstate relations. It is difficult to say unequivocally whether competition played a negative or a positive role. On the one hand, it is a factor that could have promoted development in Latvia and Lithuania as it facilitated political desire to find shortcomings and work on improvement. On the other hand, it led to the uncertainty of whether to continue cooperation or not because each state after all was evaluated on individual ground.

However, in order not to stay outside the process of integration and international decision-making, the Baltic states had to continue implementation of such already functioning regional cooperation projects as BALTBAT, BALTRON and BALTNET. It was hard to imagine one of three Baltic states to withdraw from the project unilaterally. Despite that participation in joint cooperation projects continued, competition among the Baltic states decreased. Laima Andrikiene, Lithuanian

Minister for European Affairs in an interview to Latvian newspaper *Diena* said that at that time existed "a very serious competition, and during such processes, friendly neighbouring countries become alienated" (Diena, 1997).

However, each of three Baltic states recognized that cooperation and coordination of common position concerning international issues of crucial importance should be continued and none of the three states showed an intention to step back from cooperation projects. An explanation, that could help bring the light to this twofold tendency, may be following: as Estonia was mentioned one of the most successful of the three states when it comes to the EU membership, but no such statements were heard from NATO, it proved the fact, that the EU and NATO enlargement was not directly linked. Thus, if NATO and its main player the USA see the Baltic region as unified security entity, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have to act jointly in order to succeed in becoming NATO members.

It is clear that the cooperation among the Baltic states during the examined period had a dual nature. The reason why such tendency took place could be explained by the fact that none of the three states had enough experience to clarify *why* this cooperation was necessary and *how* to deal with it in order to get maximum benefit.

4.1. Chronology of regional security cooperation among the Baltic states in 20th century.

In 1919 – 1926 existed an idea about creation of "sanitary cordon" which would include Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and Byelorussia. This corridor was supposed to create a security zone between Russia and Germany. If created, it would be a security region or so-called "vertical security belt". From 1919 to 1926 representatives of the abovementioned states met in 10 conferences but an agreement was not obtained. In 1925 the idea about security corridor fully disappeared. The following reasons could be mentioned: disagreement among Poland and Lithuania towards Vilnius district; refusal of Finland to participate seeing all the

contradictions; Ukrain and Byelorussia joined the Soviet Union, etc. The idea did not come true because it existed only in the minds of politicians; it was just a theoretical construction. Countries were too different, both politically and economically; they had a specific geographical location. The attempts to create a security region were hindered by the national security considerations of each state.

In 1923 an agreement about defence union between Latvia and Estonia was signed. This agreement laid the foundation to further cooperation in political and military field. The agreement had explicitly defensive nature. Also Lithuania declared its wish to join the agreement, but at this time disputes with Poland increased. This was the reason why negotiations were slowed down and at the end made an agreement impossible. Whereupon Lithuania excluded itself from the context of the Baltic states. In addition, also cooperation among Latvia and Estonia was not strong enough. Estonia was trying to become closer to Finland. In reality only Latvia emphasized the necessity of cooperation.

In 1934 in Geneva Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed an agreement about the creation of the Baltic Entente. There were few factors that influenced the creation of the Baltic Entente: Estonia lost hope to conclude an alliance agreement with Finland and other Scandinavian countries; Poland became closer with Germany and Lithuania slid into complete isolation as soon as understood, that neither Germany nor the Soviet Union would help it to act against Poland; fascist regime strengthened in Germany; the Soviet Union became a threat; geographical and geopolitical location of the Baltic states was rather specific. The Baltic Entente was created too late; it was small and weak. That is why it was not recognized neither by the societies of the Baltic states nor on the international level. The Baltic Entente was not a military alliance; it was not able to ward off a military offence. There were few reasons why this organization was so weak: it was not a military alliance; economically the Baltic states compete among themselves in the world market; national interests of each state were of higher priority than the common ones; authoritarianism in each of the Baltic states favoured solidarity cognition; Latvia was the only state that supported the idea

of the Baltice Entente on an ongoing basis; the Baltic states compete with each other. The Entente ceased to exist because of the following factors – there was no real goal-oriented promotion of cooperation; Estonia continued to consider itself a Scandinavian country; different foreign policy orientations of the Baltic states; absence of unified conception about the main enemy – Estonia considered the Soviet union as a main enemy; Latvia considered both the Soviet union and Germany as enemies; but for Lithuania Poland and the Soviet union was the enemies. The differences in identification of external threats created weakness of the Baltic Entente; there was a shortage of regional self-identification; absence of common historical identity; people did not feel the Baltic unity in their hearts; there was a lack of cooperation in all spheres and levels.

In 1992.-1993. a former defence minister of Latvia T. Jundzis on the analytical level proposed an idea to create the Baltic military alliance which could be NATO satellite organization. However, this idea did not get any support in the Baltic states. There were two main reasons why the idea of the Baltic military alliance did not get any support: 1) the Baltic states did not seriously consider the possibility that a tripartite military alliance could become a basis for security policy cooperation of any of the Baltic state; 2) NATO itself did not offer its support for the idea of creation of the Baltic military alliance as its satellite organization. Lithuanian defence minister Linas Linkevicius said that Baltic military alliance would hinder the Baltic states from being admitted to NATO (Lejiņš et al 1997).

4.2. Factors that promoted and hindered cooperation among the Baltic states.

One of the most important indicators of security region formation is coordination of security interests and goals. Until the middle of the 1990's the Baltic states had clear foreign policy priorities – integration into the EU and NATO. Though, official documents which reflected security visions of the Baltic states – threats and the means of preventing them, were not brought to the light simultaneously. The National security concept of Latvia was adopted in June 1995. Integration into the EU and NATO was

set as a priority. Interconnection between national and international security was not incorporated in the concept. Opportunities for regional cooperation were evaluated only in the context of interaction between the three Baltic states and did not take into consideration the cooperation within Baltic Sea region framework. Estonian national security policy formulations which first saw the light in spring 1996, contained two basic security system bulwarks – national security and international security. Basic security document contained the view that implementation of two abovementioned elements is possible through developing of national armed forces and cooperation both with Latvia and Lithuania as well as within the Baltic Sea region framework. The Parliament of Lithuania adopted security concept in December 1996. It should be stressed that the role of regional cooperation in implementing security policy was not emphasized in this document.

The cooperation among the states is a situation when participants subordinate their behaviour to actual or possible profitableness of each other by coordinating political process. It means that the policy of each state is aimed to decrease any negative consequences for the other states. Two important elements are the basis of the cooperation concept. First of all, the behaviour of each participant is oriented towards particular objective which could not be common to all the states, but it is presupposed that it will be reasonable and correspondent to own interests. Secondly, cooperation provides participants with some benefit or compensation which is not necessarily equal by size or form, but it should be mutual. Each participant, when cooperating, helps others to realize their objectives, thus attaining the own ones. Cooperation "takes place when the policies actually followed by one government are regarded by its participants as facilitating realization of their own objectives, as the result of a process of policy coordination " (Keohane 1984), (Vaiksnoras 2002: 6).

One of the most important steps in building cooperation among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was a creation of institutional base in the beginning of 1990 (Annex 1). Initial goals of the Baltic states were to obtain withdrawal of the Russian army and strengthen renewed independence. In order to gain these objectives the Baltic states

were able to mobilize and coordinate common resources. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were able to formulate which goal requires what kind of cooperation and by what means it could be achieved. Each of the three states did recognize that was in a similar situation and will not be able to gain outlined objectives faster than the others.

Shortly after gaining the independence, differences in addressing economic, political and security problems became visible. Simultaneously to cooperation, competition factors were present despite the fact that Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia had common foreign policy objectives – integration into the EU and NATO.

The way to gain these objectives was not completely identical because the Baltic states competed among each other for gaining maximum advantage from the progress they made individually. It should be stressed that the Baltic states were trying to enter the already functioning integration process with developed unified conditions and criterias. They were searching for the beneficial ways to fulfill *acqui* criterias. The speed, at which Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were approaching the integration was different: while Estonia in the beginning of the 1990's considered that will become the EU member when the next enlargement round will take place, Lithuania at the same time considered itself a leader when it comes to NATO membership.

It is impossible to deny that competition which was based on relative advantages, is an integral part of the market logic, first of all in the field of economy. That is why economic cooperation among the Baltic states and joint progress to join the EU developed more difficult. As director of Latvian Institute of International Affairs A. Lejiņš has stressed: "though NATO (and the USA as expressed in the Baltic-American charter) put inter-Baltic co-operation at a premium, the opposite is true of the EU. The Baltic states earn no "points" in this regard from the EU; in fact, the EU approach - differentiating the three Baltic states - on occasion, gave rise to tension between the Baltics" (Lejiņš 1999: 6). It could be noted that the elements of competition prevailed when examining cooperation among the Baltic states on their way to the EU. Although significant work was done in creation of unified

economic space (an agreement on free trade was concluded), situation during the examined period was far from desirable. More than this, it seems that in the economic sphere the Baltic states had two parallel policies. One, which emphasized the necessity to cooperate, common approach and understanding, was oriented towards external and internal propaganda; and the other one, which emphasized completely different ways of addressing economic, political and social problems. National identity of each of the Baltic states was incomparably stronger than common identity of Baltics, which seemed to be more declarative and as it was already mentioned was more cultivated outside the Baltics.

Already from the first days of establishing relations, the EU was acting as external factor which defined main cooperation spheres, thus, creating conditions to integration progress. "The process of agreement preparation, its nature and registration schedule also witnessed that the EU approach towards the Baltic states is based on the assumption that the Baltic states is one group of countries where mutual connection would make it easy for these states to integrate into the Union. It could be said that until publishing of *Agenda 2000* in 1997 the Baltic cooperation element was typical in the EU and Baltic relations" (Ozoliņa 1999d: 93). However, individual approach of the Baltic states towards the EU integration led to decrease of trilateral cooperation. Mutual competition often turned to irrational manifestations and overshadowed cooperation because each of the three Baltic states reacted even to accidental messages of Western politicians.

"Cautiousness of the Baltic states regarding mutual cooperation could be explained by the concerns that it could be perceived as an alternative to the EU and would hinder admission of the three states to the Union. Gradually developing the EU adaptation policies, one of the means in the realization of policy unavoidably was and would be mutual cooperation – as an addition to the policy of europeanization" (Ozoliņa 1999d: 93).

Different policy towards NATO was implemented by Lithuania which did not consider Latvia and Estonia as the equivalent cooperation partners. Lithuania considered that it is more long-sighted to cooperate with a NATO memberstate Poland. Lithuania specially stressed its individual approach towards NATO integration in 1998 before Madrid summit. Nonetheless NATO demonstrated that Baltics are viewed as a single geopolitical unit and stimulated Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to develop mutual cooperation in security field also in the future.

”When speaking about security of the Baltic states, all the three countries are viewed as a unit, and the decision which concerns one of them, should influence the two others. Partially it is necessary in order to save political efforts of the western states but it is not the only reason. It makes the Baltic states recognize political reality that despite the fact that Estonians have tights with Finns and Lithuanians with Poles, three small Baltic states are able to ensure long-lasting security development only when they will cooperate as a unit” (Zaļkalns 1999: 133).

Simultaneously with decreasing of the ability of self-defence successful cooperation on the regional level took place among Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. It is clear that cooperating, common defence abilities have increased and common security of the region have been gradually strengthened. The cooperation among the Baltic states and more widely – within the Baltic Sea region did not replace broader integration processes, but was a mean to speed up the progress towards this direction. In addition thanks to the regional projects the Baltic states were receiving both intellectual and financial help from the western countries.

Unlike other NATO memberstates of the last enlargement round which inherited ”big” defence structures, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was forced to create defence sector from scratch. It was a challenge which had its vices and virtues. There was no need for the Baltic states to decrease armed forces, to deal with social security of the retired military persons and maintenance and change of outdated military technic and armament. Procurement of armament was often delayed due to the lack of finances. It

was difficult to coordinate armament procurements among the Baltic states because purchases often were big and, it could be said, even accidental.

The most important requests, every NATO candidate country was asked to fulfill, were related to the creation of preconditions of effective cooperation with the few states of the Alliance simultaneously. First of all, it presupposed utilization of unified standard system of communications and procurement, sufficient level of NATO official language knowledge, coordinated legal base for operative participation in NATO international operations, legal and technical abilities to host reinforcements of the Alliance on their territory. Other cooperation objectives turned into qualitative personal training, effective cooperation among civil and military officials and air defence, as well as defence against biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. For this reason practical cooperation among the Baltic states within trilateral defence projects framework should be examined.

4.3. Cooperation among the Baltic states in the military field.

Since the independence of the Baltic states was restored, military cooperation has been a sphere, where interstate cooperation was the most successful. It began in 1991 and could be explained by the urgent need to resolve two issues which were on the top of the agenda of all three states – ensuring independent existence and withdrawal of Russian troops. These two key security issues were the grounds to begin cooperation in security field in intergovernmental level. In 1991 The Baltic council adopted a resolution about the development of common security concept of the Baltic states and on June 2, 1992 defence ministers of the Baltic states signed a protocol about the cooperation in defence sphere. Military cooperation projects that were implemented during the observed period were based on this document. It should be mentioned at once, that not one of the Baltic cooperation projects was based on alliance principle, according to which, attack to one of the Baltic states would be considered as attack to all three Baltic states. The reason was the participation of the support nations in these

projects and it is difficult to imagine that those states could take part in the projects, which are based on alliance principles.

The cooperation concepts are based on two important elements. First, behaviour of each participant is oriented towards a concrete goal which was necessarily not common to the other states, but it means reasonable and responding to own interests action. Secondly, cooperation provides participants with some kind of benefit or compensation. Each participant cooperating, helps others to realize their goals, thus fulfilling its own ones.

Already in the beginning of the 1990's an institutional base for the cooperation was established – The Baltic Assembly, The Council of Ministers and The Baltic Council ensured regular political dialogue and exchange of views about essential foreign and security policy as well as other important issues.

According to Margus Kolga, the Baltic military cooperation during the period before NATO membership could be divided into two periods. The first one, which started in 1993 when declaration for joint security of the Baltic states was signed between Defence ministries of three states, he calls „The quest for Western acknowledgement” (Latvijas Vēstnesis 1993). The second period – ”The quest for Western integration” - began in 1999 when Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania started their Membership Action Plan process with NATO and lasted until March 2004 when all three became members of the Alliance. According to Kolga, there is also the third stage of the Baltic cooperation in the defence field – ”cooperation as Allies” which took place after three states joined the Alliance, but as the period examined in this thesis is limited to year 2004, cooperation on this stage will not be examined (Kolga 2006).

During the first period military cooperation existed at all levels, both among armies and among the national guard units of the three Baltic states and the main part of meaningful military cooperation projects was initiated during this period. Since 1994 annually updated activity plan was the base for trilateral cooperation. The defence

ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as commanders of the armed forces and other members of the military structures met on the regular basis.

In November 1993 the concept of Baltic peacekeeping unit was proposed at the meeting of the Chiefs of Defense of the Baltic States. Already in September 1994 the first agreement among the Baltic states concerning the formation of Baltic peacekeeping unit (BALTBAT), followed by agreement with Supporting States was signed. As the three Baltic states had to build their defence systems from scratch and had limited resources and the experience level was quite low, BALTBAT project was an important field for learning to know each other and building confidence. It should be mentioned that the most part of decisions concerning the Project in the beginning stage was taken by the Supporting States due to the low level of experience of the three Baltic states in multinational projects. However, BALTBAT gave Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania an opportunity not only to enhance the soldiering capabilities, but also to gain knowledge about the decision - making process and improve management skills, not to mention increased their self-confidence (Kolga 2006).

In the beginning of 1996 BALTBAT Headquarters started operations in Ādaži training area in Latvia but in October it became clear that BALTBAT could be used for new projects. Therefore it was reorganized in infantry battalions which were ready to engage in peace-keeping operations (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia: 1996). Thus, in 1997 Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian BALTBAT companies joined Norwegian, Swedish and Danish peace-keeping battalions that were in service in Lebanon and Bosnia (Lejiņš et al 1997).

The BALTBAT project was significant in several aspects. First of all, Baltic states proved that they are reliable cooperation partners, not speaking about the increased level of experience and confidence the military field working with other nations. Secondly, as the popularity of peace-keeping as a tool to establish peace in the world was growing, it opened to the Baltic states an opportunity to prove that they are not only security importers, but are also able to make contributions to security structures.

This was very important because it enabled three Baltic states to begin developing their forces from the very basic level which does not require any complicated training and advanced military means as war – fighting capabilities do. The establishment of BALTBAT opened an opportunity to deploy the Baltic soldiers in Bosnia, thus helping to gain a lesson of „westernization” for the military personnel of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Kapustans 1998). These factors were fundamentally important taking into account the desire of all the three Baltic states to join NATO. As the US State Department Spokesperson Michael McCurry noted:

”The Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion constitutes the first example of voluntary regional peace-keeping cooperation in the area; (...) this program would recognize regional cooperation, encourage Baltic efforts to improve NATO interoperability” (US Department of State Dispatch 1994). This statement indirectly confirms that the US being the key actor in NATO, was interested in the Baltic states as it recognized that they have a potential to become not only security ”importers” but also security ”exporters”. Looking from today’s perspective, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, being NATO memberstates, actively implement partnership programs with the countries like Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan.

The second important joint military cooperation project implemented by the Baltic states was Baltic Naval Squadron (BALTRON). The idea about the establishment of joint Naval force unit first appeared in 1995 during the first joint training AMBER SEA – 95. In 1996 after the international conference which was held in Vilnius began the realization of BALTRON. Germany took a leading role in coordination of international assistance. In the first half of 1998 the Agreement among the Baltic states on the establishment of BALTRON was signed and later this year also Agreement among the Western support nations (Ministry of Defence of Latvia 1998).

The main idea of BALTRON was similar to that of BALTBAT, namely, to establish the basis for closer cooperation among naval forces of three Baltic states and promote cooperation with Western navies. Official inauguration of BALTRON took place in August 1998. It participated as a naval unit in the ”Open spirit’98” training exercise in

September 1998 (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia 1998). This project was another step in developing joint procedures and conducting of joint planning, training and exercises.

The third project that should be named here is Baltic Air Surveillance Network (BALTNET) which has its roots in the Regional Airspace Initiative, proposed by the USA in the beginning of 1990's. The idea was to raise air-control management capability in Central – Eastern Europe, namely, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. In 1995 an initiative to create an integrated air – surveillance system BALTNET appeared and in 1997 the Regional Airspace Initiative was applied to the Baltic states as the US Congress confirmed 10,3 million US dollars financing for establishing Air Space Surveillance center in the Baltic states. In april 1998 governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania agreed to establish the Baltic Airspace Surveillance Center in Lithuania. BALTNET, as well as BALTBAT and BALTRON is also a multilateral project, which was leaded by a support nation. In this case it was Norway (Ministry of Defence of Latvia 1998).

As a researcher in Latvian Institute of International Affairs and a lecturer in Vidzemes university Jānis Kapustans stressed, BALTNET project is unique because "the establishment of a modern airspace control system in the Baltic countries can be seen as the first step on the way to establishing an air space defence system" (Kapustans 1998).

The latest cooperation project for the armed forces of the Baltic states – Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL). In June 1998 an agreement among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania concerning the foundation of BALTDEFCOL was scored and in September 1998 an initial college staff began their work in Tartu, Estonia. The first course for senior staff began in August 1999. This military cooperation project was also supported by the Nordic countries. Sweden was playing a role of the project coordinator this time.

The four abovementioned projects were not the only joined cooperation projects in the military field among the Baltic states, but they were the most successful and prominent ones. The success of these projects made Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania initiate such projects as Baltic Command, Control and Information System (BALTCCIS) which was supported by Germany and the Baltic Medical System project (BALTMED), supported by Sweden. However, these projects did not receive much attention due to the lack of continuous interest, mainly from self Baltic states (Ministry of Defence of Estonia 2002: 23).

On the other hand, the participation of forces of the Baltic states in NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) as a part of the Nordic Brigade and Stabilisation Force (SFOR) operations (BALTBAT was participating in SFOR since 1998, deploying 100 personnel) demonstrated their readiness to join the Alliance and proved that they are not potential "free-riders" but also "security providers" which are able to make contributions by participating in peace – keeping missions. On the other hand, Baltics realized that despite the high level of motivation they still have a long way to go to be in a full compliance with NATO standards. The lack of experience and limited management capacity was among the main problems Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian armed forces units faced during the participation in peace-keeping operations.

The second period started in 1999 with NATO's Washington Declaration and Membership Action Plan (MAP) when nine potential candidates including the Baltic states were named. Although Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania started to cooperate with the Alliance in 1994 when joined PfP programme after the presidents of the three Baltic states declared their intention to join NATO, the first official relations between the Baltic states and NATO started already in the end of 1992 when the three Baltic states became the members of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council.

Despite the fact that all the three countries had the same goals and faced similar problems and challenges during this period, consultations and coordination on the

working level was not held on the regular basis. Each of the three Baltic states was informed about successes and failures of the others but no attempts to work out common positions or take common actions were made (Kolga 2006). Possible explanation of such behaviour could lie in the belief that each of them will do better alone than together and that possible failure of one of them would worsen the image of the others, thus decreasing chances to join the Alliance.

Estonia took rather painfully the decision of the Prime Minister of Lithuania Algirdas Brazauskas to send an official letter to NATO about Lithuania's desire to be invited to become a member of the Alliance. Estonia's frustration could be explained first of all by the fact that the abovementioned official letter was sent shortly after presidents of the three Baltic states signed Joint declaration was signed. Secondly, Lithuania did not hold any consultations with Latvia and Estonia concerning this issue. It should be noted that it was Lithuania which began to promote the idea of inviting at least one Baltic state to join NATO. It recognizing very well that Western politicians are informed that exactly Lithuania reached the best results in reforming its defence and security sector (Vilpisauskas 2000: 12). This policy has been actively promoted after another event which led to undermining of confidence among the three Baltic states, namely, when in 1998 only Estonia was invited to start negotiations on the EU membership (Urbelis 2002a: 34).

The US – Baltic Partnership Charter, signed on January 16, 1998 was a significant event which forced the Baltic states to work together more actively. The multilateral, not bilateral nature of the charter played an important role in promoting cooperation which was decreasing due to the low interest of the participating actors (Kapustans 1998).

However, military cooperation did not reach the same intensity level as in the previous period and new initiatives were not implemented with the same enthusiasm. Very often they did not even reach implementary phase but remained only on the paper. Even when it came to the projects in procurement area, where benefits from

joint action could have resulted in reduction of costs, no goal oriented action was taken. As an example the acquisition of 3D air-defence radar TPS 117 by Estonia and Latvia could be mentioned (Kristovskis 2002: 21).

A tendency to act individually led to decrease of information exchange. The lack of coordinated actions resulted in the fact that a number of tasks the Ministers of Defence delegated to their Chiefs of Defence in the Military Committee were not fulfilled (Kolga 2006). However, some positive tendencies were visible during this period. Together with the growing luggage of experience and development of defence structure of the Baltic states, also their cooperation in this field came to another level and changed the focus. More attention was paid to further development of national defence capabilities within the framework of abovementioned projects, not to the projects as such. Though, the tendency of each Baltic state to stand for its own interests rather than to concentrate on the common goals, was visible.

Among the main factors which promoted the cooperation in the security field was similar perception of security risks and common external security policy objectives. For the three Baltic states which did not have any real security guarantees before joining the Alliance, trilateral cooperation in security and political field could be viewed as a collective effort oriented towards the reduction of risks and maintaining of stability in the Baltic sub-region.

The cooperation among the three Baltic states has taken different forms. Periods of intensive trilateral cooperation and mutual interest in joint projects and consultations, for example, planning and implementation of common airspace control and naval surveillance systems, were replaced by the periods when indifference and “beauty contest” when each country was trying to show its own achievements, prevailed. Lithuania, compared to Estonia and Latvia, was more successful in building up its defence structure. Estonia, in its turn, was considered to be the most successful in economic field, if compared to its Baltic neighbours.

The three Baltic states had necessary prerequisites for successful cooperation. First of all, the three Baltic states are small countries with limited resources and none of them were claiming for hegemon position. This maintained the equality in the mutual relationship. Identical foreign and security policy goals – integration into the EU and NATO was an additional factor that favoured the cooperation. However, in practice, correct high – level political decisions taken by the Baltic defence ministers, were implemented only thanks to the supporting nations. Joined projects which did not require a great number of manpower and material resources but had concrete and narrow objectives and necessary equipment were able to move forward. Whereas realization of complicated and resource - demanding projects, for example BALTBAT, faced problems and delays. Diminishing support and enthusiasm towards the projects which lacked clear set objectives and capacity to reach the goal that was set in the beginning of the project, led the shadow on the necessity to start new joint projects.

The recognition that projects required unexpected amount of resources and difficulties to keep mutual commitments due to "the lack of experience and knowledge of the real costs of the defence for sovereign nations" (Kolga 2006) was a serious test to trilateral cooperation among the Baltic states in the security field.

The cooperation among the three Baltic states has been very fruitful in the field of peace-keeping. The decision to combine efforts and create peace-keeping battalion, consisting of the representatives of the armed forces of the three nations in order to contribute to UN peace-keeping efforts, was a meaningful step towards the development of trilateral cooperation in the security field. Orientation towards participation in international operations was Janus - faced. On the one hand the lack of international experience on the initial stage was visible. On the other hand, however, it was a good pooling of the resources and efforts for the Armed Forces of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Vaiksnoras 2002: 12).

The assistance of the Nordic states to the Baltic projects could not be overestimated. Looking from today's perspective, it was the first step towards the cooperation and mutual interoperability of the armed forces of the Baltic countries and Nordic armed forces which is a crucial precondition for joint participation in the international operations.

Whether Baltic states form a sub-regional unit and this fact could be considered as facilitating integration, cooperation in security field have arisen mainly because of similar perception of external risks and threats. Geographic nearness and similar historical experience as well as compatible size without doubt, played a positive role in the initial stage of cooperation development. though these factors were secondary when establishing the cooperation within a sub-regional unit (Purlys et al 1995: 27). As it was already mentioned, the cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was considered by the Western countries as a natural thing. As defence cooperation between the three Baltic states was considered *a priori* to be a good thing, "disagreements which unavoidably occurred in the process of cooperation were immediately interpreted as irresponsible behaviour on the part of the Balts and therefore came under sharp criticism from the supporting states" (Vilpisauskas 2000: 12). This fact allows to draw the conclusion that the image of the Baltic geopolitical unit and the position of the Western countries in dealing with all the three countries simultaneously rather than on the individual basis was among the main factors that promoted Baltic cooperation during the examined period.

Aspirations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to become the members of NATO on the one hand could be considered as a fact that stimulated trilateral cooperation in the security field. The influence of the main Baltic "lobby" in NATO – the USA on promotion of Baltic cooperation was clearly visible. The creation of Baltic Action Plan for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which was "an attempt to solve the problem of integrating the three Baltic countries into Europe without offering them NATO membership and assuring that the West is not neglecting them", also played a positive role in promoting the cooperation among the Baltic states.

The plan was composed of three sections: assistance to the Baltic states in joining Western security institutions by improving coordination; encouraging to improving relations between them and Russian Federation. Part three was dedicated to the US - Baltic relations, including increasing of economic and military assistance as well as anticipated joint military exercise of the US troops and BALTBAT (British American Security Information Council). It should be stressed that the factor of financial assistance US promised to provide had its influence on promotion of the cooperation. This is true for both abovementioned multilateral projects which would not have been implemented without western support (Denmark and later Norway played an important role) and for the US – Baltic Partnership Charter which was signed on January 16, 1998. Strict position of the United States to sign a joint document despite the desire of Estonia and especially Lithuania to conclude separate agreements with the US, made three Baltic states work together, thus promoting the cooperation. Common NATO-compatible airspace control system which came true thanks to the financial assistance of the US and pressure to find common solution on this issue, is another evidence of the influence the US had on the Baltic cooperation. Thus, the US played a positive role in the promotion of the cooperation among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the level where political will to reach mutually favourable results was needed. The cooperation among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the practical level was promoted by the necessity to implement joint training activities in order to prepare for exercises with NATO countries. The fact that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have chosen the EU and NATO as their foreign policy priorities already presupposed the necessity of such cooperation. It was clear that going separate roads would take much longer than if coordinating political activities. Pressure from Northern neighbours and international organizations was an additional external factor which motivated the Baltic states to cooperate. It has been argued that Western support, particularly that of Great Britain and Nordic countries, which actively supported common Baltic military activities such as BALTNET, BALTRON and BALTBAT and BALTDEFCOL was crucial for implementation of PfP tasks and preparing for NATO membership. It also was a driving force which facilitated

trilateral cooperation in the area of security and military affairs (Vilpisauskas 2000:12).

It could be concluded that sub - regional cooperation among the Baltic states in security field was encumbered with the lack of resources and political experience, which basically lead to a situation, when three Baltic states began to search for other self-realization opportunities. Each of the Baltic states, choosing integration into the EU and NATO as a top priority issues, realized that in the initial period efforts and resources should be joined in order to claim membership in abovementioned organizations. However, when being potential members, their behaviour was very much dependent on such external factors as reaction and support of the EU and NATO to their successes or failures to implement reforms. Interstate cooperation increased in the periods when it was asked for, as in the case of Baltic – American Charter or when it was not possible to resolve a task or a problem individually. As soon as one of the countries was declared to have progress, increased its desire to mobilize resources and to fulfill all the tasks by its own, outspacing concurents.

CONCLUSIONS

Fundamental changes that took place in the world security system during the decade after the end of the Cold War also influenced also the Baltic states. After the bipolar world order which existed during the Cold War ceased to exist, strong fixed positions and easily modelled situations, also the time when a number of declarative plans and conceptual documents was of importance passed. The situation in the world, in Europe and in the Baltic Sea region developed very dynamic at that time.

After the examination of different definitions and features of the small states it could be concluded that the Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are small, weak states. During the examined period three Baltic states had only limited resources and low ability to influence world politics, but also were also underdeveloped in economical and military sense. It should be stressed that the Baltic states fully recognized their inability to ensure security only with their own means. A typical feature of the small states is tendency towards collectivism, joining international organizations and internationalization of issues. The Baltic states are commensurable both in qualitative and quantitative means and had common foreign policy objectives and security policy priorities – integration into the EU and NATO.

The engagement of the small states in the international organizations is an ability to cooperate, thus, multiplying security realization means thanks to assistance and support of other members.

Insecurity is one of the fundamental features of the small states. It has to be examined taking into account the influence of the external environment. Small states are vulnerable to the circumstances created by geopolitical condition which could both improve and worsen security situation of small states and their ability to influence the international processes.

Limited resources lead to a situation when small states are vulnerable to different kinds of threats. It hinders competition with the other states in solution of global problems. After restoring the independence security of the Baltic states was threatened mainly by internal factors and the danger of these factors was sometimes stimulated by the tense relations with Russia.

Even more after restoring independence all the three Baltic states were encumbered with the internal threats such as social and economic problems - social insecurity of the population, poverty, high unemployment level etc. Integration into the EU and NATO seemed a logical step in their movement towards modern, democratic, secure and economically strong states.

It was clarified in the research that the cooperation between the Baltic states in security and defence area was a reality but had a wave effect. The cooperation was quite successful in defence field but limited to certain extend due to the lack of resources in all areas, and, especially in the military one. The lack of experience in managing joint projects also could be mentioned as a factor that hindered cooperation. The cooperation between the Baltic states was influenced by the external factors such as international organizations and countries which had influence in the Baltic region. Russia could be considered as the factor which brought Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania closer together as all the three countries perceived the bigger neighbour as a potential threat to their security especially during the first years after the restoration of independence. Another important factor which facilitated the cooperation between the Balts was that the United States saw the Baltic states as a unified region and the Nordic countries which wanted the Baltic Sea region to be a region of stability. Despite that the cooperation in security and defence area had its ups and downs, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania showed that they have potential to work together.

Institutional basis which was established in the beginning of 1990's and ensured regular political dialogue and facilitated development of trilateral cooperation projects in defence area (BALTBAT, BALTRON, BALTNET, BALTSEA, BALTDEFCOL)

served well to the Balts and helped to fulfil the goals these three Baltic countries set for themselves - membership in the EU and NATO.

In the research the factors that facilitated the cooperation between the Baltic states were displayed:

- The Baltic states are commensurable both qualitatively and quantitatively;
- The Baltic states had similar historical experience and common foreign policy and security goals – integration into the EU and NATO;
- The Baltic states began to build their defence sectors simultaneously and from similar positions. That is why it was necessary to cooperate in order to develop rapidly;
- The Baltic states shared similar perception of European and global processes and saw themselves as a part of Europe.

Despite that cooperation between the Baltic states was rather often overshadowed by such factor as competition, cooperation in the security area facilitated admission of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the EU and NATO, because:

- 1) As the USA wanted to see Europe as a homogen region and the Northern countries wanted to see the Baltic Sea region as a region of stability, cooperating the Baltic states strengthened their security and defence capabilities, hence also common security of the Baltic region;
- 2) Cooperation institutions of the Baltic states adapted a number of documents (Annex 2) which coordinated the Baltic cooperation and facilitated integration processes into Euroatlantic structures. NATO requirements to the candidate states (the Baltic states) were mutually interconnected with the Baltic cooperation;
- 3) The participation in peacekeeping operations, rescue operations, mine clearance operations and other areas with their military forces and specialists, the Baltic states showed that they are not only consumers of European and international security, the so – called “free riders” but are also able to make contribution in strenghtening the international security.

- 4) The Baltic states working together in military projects (BALTBAT, BALTNET, BALTRON, BALTDEFCOL) developed the compatibility of their armed forces with NATO forces;
- 5) Preparation of the Baltic states to the EU and NATO membership was not the end goal itself but the opportunity to increase their maturity.

By reaching the objectives of the master's thesis, the hypothesis, that the cooperation of the Baltic states in the security area facilitated their admission to the EU and NATO, is proved.

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Annex 1

Cooperation of the Baltic states within the institutional framework

Baltic Assembly²

The Baltic Assembly (BA) is an institution for parliamentary co-operation among Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. It was established on 8 November 1991. Each of the Baltic states is represented in the Assembly by 12-20 parliamentarians. The Assembly is a co-ordinating and consultative institution. Baltic Assembly sessions take place once a year. The BA has the right to make its views known to the national parliaments, governments and the Baltic Council of Ministers in the form of a resolution, decision, declaration and recommendation, while using the form of an appeal, proposal, or announcement when addressing other international or regional organizations. Between sessions, the Presidium of the BA may make decisions about current issues.

The Baltic Assembly has five standing committees: Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics; Education, Science and Culture; Environmental Protection and Energy; Legal Affairs and Security, and Social Affairs. Beginning in 2003, the presidency of the Baltic Assembly was co-ordinated with the Baltic Council of Ministers, and a one-year presidency was introduced.

The Baltic Council of Ministers³

The Baltic Council of Ministers (BCM) established on 13 June 1994, is an institution for governmental co-operation among Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The highest decision-making body of the Baltic Council of Ministers is the Session of the heads of government (Council of Ministers), which takes place at least once a year.

The BCM is charged with ensuring the continuity of co-operation at the executive level of the states. It is responsible for co-operation among the governments of the

² Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Latvia: www.mfa.gov.lv.

³ Ibid.

Baltic states, as well as the co-operation between the governments and the Baltic Assembly. The BCM makes decisions regarding the implementation of recommendations of the Baltic Assembly. It promotes a broad and substantive mutual co-operation. The BCM has decision-making powers only if representatives of all three Baltic states are present. Decisions are made by consensus.

To ensure purposeful activity by the BCM at the level of sector ministries, Committees of Senior Officials were formed in 1994. Until 2004 there were 18 such committees under the auspices of the BCM. Beginning in 2005, their number was reduced to five: Defence, Energy, Home Affairs, Transport and Communications, and Environment committees.

The presidency of the BCM is rotated annually among the Baltic states.

The military cooperation between the three Baltic states was monitored and guided by the following mechanism: **Ministers' Committee** (MC), composed of the defence ministers, gives political indications and takes the main decisions concerning trilateral cooperation in the defence area; **Baltic Military Committee** (BMC), composed of the chiefs of defence, represents higher military authority and implements the decisions taken by the defence ministers, provides evaluation of common projects from the military point of view and introduces propositions for further cooperation.

AGREEMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS

1994

- Agreement on Baltic Parliamentary and Governmental Co-operation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania;
- Terms of Reference of the Baltic Council of Ministers;
- Regulations for the Committees of Senior Officials;
- Agreement concerning the Establishment and Formation of Joint Peacekeeping Unit;
- Agreement concerning the co-operation on the National border guards;
- Agreement on juridical assistance and legal relations;
- Statement on Baltic Co-operation;
- Joint Communiqué' and statement on the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic states;
- Statement on celebration of national holidays of the Baltic states;

1995

- Frame Agreement on Co-operation in the field of Defence;
- Agreement on visa-free traveling;
- Agreement on the re-admission of persons residing illegally;
- Agreement and Protocol on migration policy;
- Agreement on co-operation in the field of environmental protection;
- Resolution adopting the first annual Plan of Action of the Baltic Council of Ministers;
- Statement on the activities of the BMC;

1996

- Protocol on Co-operation between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers;
- Bilateral agreements on protection of investments; bilateral agreements on aviation;
- Two statements on the activities of the BMC;
- Joint statements on the Vienna conclusions and CFE Treaty;

1997

- Free Trade Agreement on Trade in Agricultural Products;
- Memorandum of Understanding on establishing Baltic Battalion;
- Memorandum of Understanding on establishing Baltic Naval Squadron;
- Bilateral agreements on social security;

- Protocol, joint statement and basic principles on Baltic Governments Data Communications System;
- Joint statements on the progress of integration into the EU;
- Statement concerning regional airspace initiative;
- Resolution on customs union;
- Resolution on the improvement of transit transport;
- Statement on the activities of the BMC;
- Resolutions on common economic area and EU Third Pillar issues;

1998

- Agreement on abolition of non-tariff barriers to trade;
- Agreement on Baltic Common Transit Procedure;
- Agreement on co-operation in energy sector;
- Resolutions on the activities of the BMC;
- Resolutions adopting the Plan of actions for 1998-1999;

1999

- Agreement on Baltic Common Transit Procedure;
- Agreement on Consular Assistance and Co-operation;
- Agreement concerning the Baltic Battalion;
- Agreement concerning the Establishment of the Baltic Naval Squadron;
- Agreement on the Establishment of the Baltic Air Surveillance Network;
- Baltic Energy Strategy;
- Resolution on the activities of the BMC;
- Resolution adopting the Plan of actions for 1999-2000;

2000

- Agreement concerning the Baltic Defence College;
- Agreement on Merchant Shipping;
- Agreement concerning the protection of witnesses and victims;
- Bilateral agreements on mutual protection of classified information;
- Resolution on the activities of the BMC.

2001

- Bilateral agreements on mutual assistance in disaster situations;
- Memorandum of Understanding on the administration, financing and management of the Baltic battalion.

2002

- Memorandum of Understanding on establishment, functioning, management and administration of the Baltic Naval Diving Training Center;
- Memorandum on the Baltic common market of electric energy;
- Agreement on cooperation within tourism area.

2003

- Memorandum of Understanding on functioning, administration and management of the Baltic defence college.